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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001516

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2015

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [KBCT](#) [YM](#) [KNP](#) [DEMARCHE](#) [TRAFFICKING](#) [PERSONS](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DELIVERS TIP, GTMO, ARAB-ISRAELI

DEMARCHES: DISCUSSES IRAN WITH FM

REF: A. SECSTATE 100432

[B](#). SECSTATE 97599

[C](#). SECSTATE 95828

[D](#). SECSTATE 92662

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Krajewski for reasons 1.5 b and d.

[1](#). (C) Summary. Ambassador delivered reftel demarches to Minister of Foreign Affairs Qirbi on June 1 on the Yemen Trafficking in Persons report, return of Yemenis from Guantanamo, and Arab League support for the Arab-Israeli peace process. The FM also discussed details of his recent trip to Iran, including Iran's positions on al-Houthi, nuclear proliferation, and Iraq. End summary.

Yemen Cautions Iran on al-Houthi Support

[2](#). (C) Just returned from an official visit to Tehran, Qirbi said Yemen engaged the Government of Iran in a frank discussion about the al-Houthi rebellion. Iran was "misinformed about the nature of the al-Houthi rebellion in Saada," contended Qirbi, saying Iran was wrong in its belief that the ROYG is waging a war against Shi'a. While al-Houthi and his followers follow Twelver Shi'a theology, they are few in number. The vast majority of Yemenis in the Saada region are Zaydi, and in Qirbi's view are not Shi'a as they follow Islamic jurisprudence that is closer to the Sunni tradition. Qirbi also denied that the ROYG was persecuting Shi'a clergy or confiscating religious texts. Following recent public statements from Iran in support of the rebellion, Qirbi said that during his visit he warned Iran "against meddling in Yemen's internal affairs."

[3](#). (C) On the issue of nuclear proliferation, Qirbi said Iran continues to believe it has the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes but is willing to discuss inspection mechanisms. Iran does not feel threatened by sanctions, said Qirbi, as they have extensive domestic capacity. (Note: Yemen officially opposes all nuclear arms in the region. End note.) In Qirbi's opinion, Iran should be flexible and demonstrate it has no negative nuclear intentions. On upcoming elections, Qirbi agreed with most political analysts, saying that Rafsanjani appears likely to win the presidency as a compromise candidate between reformers and conservative clerics. He also said that Iranian officials are confident in the newly elected Iraqi Government and its ability to control terrorism, and viewed instability in Iraq as comparable to their own history following the Iranian Revolution.

Reducing Poverty Will End Child Trafficking

[4](#). (SBU) Ambassador notified the FM that Yemen had been listed for the first time as a Tier 2 country in this year's Trafficking in Persons report (ref A). Ambassador raised the issue of organized trafficking of Yemeni children to Saudi Arabia for exploitation as beggars and laborers as of Yemen's major TIP problems that the ROYG needs to combat. Ambassador recognized the difficulty in taking on this problem given Yemen's limited resources, but noted the importance of the ROYG building a comprehensive TIP strategy to decrease this and other TIP-related practices in Yemen. Qirbi responded that emigration to KSA is not essentially a trafficking problem, but rather the result of extreme poverty driving youth to seek work across the border. The solution to this problem, said Qirbi, is development and poverty alleviation.

No Enthusiasm for Arab League Boycott

[5](#). (C) Ambassador delivered ref B demarche encouraging Arab League capitals to support the Middle East Peace Process, and urged Yemen to oppose continuation or expansion of the boycott against companies that do business with Israel. The Arab League will continue to support the Palestinian Authority, said Qirbi, and will make the necessary contributions to the Authority's budget. Although some Arab states continue to see the boycott as a useful tool to pressure Israel, explained Qirbi, in reality it has been relaxed in recent years and few countries actually implement

it. The boycott will ease automatically without pressure from the outside, insisted the FM, if the peace process is successful.

GTMO Returnees: "We Have Nothing Against Them"

16. (C) Ambassador delivered ref C demarche on continued detention of Yemeni prisoners, and ref D demarche on the return of five Yemeni prisoners from Guantanamo Bay. The FM received names of the prisoners in question, and for a second time our request for guarantees that these Yemenis not be mistreated upon their return. If they are Yemenis, said Qirbi, and "the U.S. has nothing against them, then we have nothing against them."
Krajeski